

## Message Text

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TRSY-02 USIA-06 /091 W  
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R 311537Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2748

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 ABIDJAN 3270

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: AMGT PFOR IV

SUBJ: PARM-ANNUAL POLICY AND RESOURCE ASSESSMENT-  
PART I: IVORY COAST

REF: A CERP 0001 B STATE 38356 C ABIDJAN 001, 002

### A. US INTERESTS

1. IVORY COAST AND THE US SHARE SIMILAR VIEWS OF THE WORLD FROM VERY DIFFERENT VANTAGE POINTS. THE IVORY COAST CONSIDERS ITSELF PART OF THE WESTERN COMMUNITY OF NATIONS AND LOOKS TO THE US TO PROVIDE ENLIGHTENED LEADERSHIP ON MAJOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES AFFECTING BOTH COUNTRIES. THIS COINCIDENCE OF VIEWS TENDS TO MITIGATE, WHERE IT DOES NOT HARMONIZE, THE DIFFERING PRIORITIES AND INTERESTS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES ON INDIVIDUAL ISSUES SUCH AS THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE, IN WHICH THE IVORY COST PARTICIPATES AS A THIRD WORLD STATE DETERMINED TO SECURE A BETTER DEAL FOR DEVELOPING NATIONS, AND SOUTHERN AFRICA, WHERE THE IVORY COST SEEKS A MORE DIRECT AND PROMINENT US ROLE TO OFFSET INCREASING SOVIET AND CUBAN INFLUENCE.

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2. UNDER THE GENERALLY BENIGN AND PRAGMATIC LEADERSHIP OF HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY THE IVORY COST PUTS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FIRST, AND TENDS TO EVALUATE ITS POLITICAL POLICIES IN TERMS OF THEIR ABILITY TO ENCOURAGE OR IMPEDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THIS APPROACH HAS BEEN REMARKABLY SUCCESSFUL. THE IVORY COAST HAS REGISTERED AN ANNUAL GROWTH RATE OF ABOUT 8 PCT OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS,

IN REAL TERMS, AND HAS DONE SO WITHIN A POLITICAL CLIMATE NOTABLY FREE OF COERCION AND RACIAL DISHARMONY. IVORIAN CROWTH PROVIDES, IN FACT, VIRTUALLY A TEXT-BOOK EXAMPLE OF WHAT A SMALL, AGRICULTURAL COUNTRY CAN DO BY CREATING CONDITIONS ATTRACTIVE TO WESTERN INVESTMENT CAPITAL IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF POLITICAL CONSENSUS AND STABILITY.

3. FROM THIS STANDPOINT, THE IVORY COAST MAY BE SOMETHING OF A TOUCHSTONE FOR US POLICY IN AFRICA AND THE THIRD WORLD GENERALLY. IF THE US POSITON ON ECONOMIC OR POLITICAL QUESTIONS OF IMPORTANCE TO THE THIRD WORLD FAILS TO BE ACCEPTED HERE, IT IS UNLIKELY TO BE UNDERSTOOD ELSEWHERE IN THE THIRD WORLD; AND IF IVORY COAST'S EFFORTS TOWARD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FALTER OR FAIL, THE CASE FOR A RADICAL DOGMATIC APPROACH TO THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE WILL BE STRENGTHENED. THE IVORIAN EXPERIMENT DESERVES TO SUCCEED BOTH ON ITS MERITS AND BECAUSE ITS SUCCESS CAN DEMONSTRATE THE VALIDITY OF WESTERN VALUES AND POLICIES TO OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHICH, BY AND LARGE, HAVE FAILED EVEN TO GIVE THEM A FAIR TEST.

4. US COMMERICAL INTERESTS IN IVORY COAST ARE MODEST BUT EXPANDING RAPIDLY. IVORIAN IMPORTS FROM THE US TOUCHED \$100 MILLION IN 1976, AND US INVESTMENT REACHED ABOUT \$65 MILLION. MORE IMPORTANT, IVORY COAST IS BECOMING A SIGNIFICANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT, FINANCIAL, AND MARKETING CENTER. DRAWN BY ITS POLITICAL STABILITY, CONVERTIBLE CURRENCY, AND ATTTRACTIVE AMBIENCE, AMERICAN AND OTHER FIRMS ARE ESTABLISHING HEADQUARTERS IN ABIDJAN AT AN CONFIDENTIAL

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ACCELERATING PACE. NINETY-FIVE AMERICAN FIRMS AND SALES OFFICES AT LAST COUNT WERE REPRESENTED IN ABIDJAN. ASSUMING CONTINUED GROWTH AND STABILITY, IVORY COAST WILL BE OF INCREASING IMPORTANCE FOR US COMMERCIAL INTERSTS.

## B. OVERVIEW

5. CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS OF IVORY COAST'S AMBITIOUS DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND RESPONSIBLE INTERNATIONAL POSITION MAY BE THE CONTINUED GOOD HEALTH OF FELIX HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY. IVORY COAST'S INSTITUTIONS HAVE AS GOOD A CHANCE OF SURVIVING THE FOUNDING FATHER AS THOSE OF ANY NATION OF BLACK AFRICA, BUT NO NEW LEADER COULD EVOKE THE REVERENCE IN WHICH HOUPHOUET IS HELD, AND A SUCCESSOR WILL BE MORE VULNERABLE TO DOMESTIC DEMANDS AND TO CRITICISM FROM ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA. EVEN IF HOUPHOUET CONTINUES IN POWER THERE WILL BE PRESSURES FROM YOUNGER IVORIANS, SEEKING POSITIONS OF INCREASED RESPONSIBILITY WHICH THE GOIC WILL BE STRAINED TO MAKE AVAILABLE. SEVENTEEN YEARS

AFTER INDEPENDENCE IVORY COAST IS STILL DEPENDENT, PERHAPS OVERLY SO, ON FRENCH MANAGERIAL AND TECHNICAL EXPERTISE. THE RAPID DEPARTURE OF FRENCH MANAGERIAL CADRE, WHICH WOULD OPEN NEW POSITION TO AMBITIOUS IVORIANS, COULD AT THE SAME TIME BE DETRIMENTAL TO FURTHER DEVELOPMENT. THE RESOLUTION OF THESE INTERRELATED PROBLEMS WILL BE HARD FOR HOUPHOUET, AND EVEN HARDER FOR HIS SUCCESSOR.

6. EXTERNAL FACTORS SPECIALLY PEETINENT TO IVORY COAST'S SUCCESS INCLUDE THE DEGREE TO WHICH GOIC BORROWING TO FINANCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CAN BE COVERED BY SALES OF PRIMARY AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS. THE US HAS NO AID PROGRAM IN IVORY COAST, ALTHOUGH CONSIDERABLE ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN CHanneLED THROUGH MULTINATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. BUT TRADE LIBERIALIZATION, THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE US CAN BE FORTH-COMING IN NORTH-SOUTH FORA, AND EVEN THE SUPPORT OF WHAT WE MAY CONSIDER INEFFICIENT TRANSFER MECHANISMS (PARTICULARLY

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COMMODITY PRICES), WILL BE SEEN BY THE GOIC AS DIRECTLY RESPONSIVE TO THEIR NEEDS.

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7. IN THE POLITICAL DOMAIN, IVORY COAST REMAINS COMMITTED TO "DIALOGUE" AND CONCERNED ABOUT ACCELERATED MILITARY CONFRONTATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND ELSEWHERE. GOIC IS SUPPORTIVE OF U.S. AND U.K. EFFORTS IN SOUTHERN

AFRICA AND DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS OF SOVIET INTENTIONS. NEVERTHELESS, IVORY COAST IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO EXPAND ITS RELATIONSHIPS IN EASTERN EUROPE, AND MAY IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS ESTABLISH TIES WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND CONCEIVABLY WITH THE PRC. THIS SHOULD NOT ALTER GOIC'S BASIC ORIENTATION TOWARD THE WEST. IVORY COAST SHOULD REMAIN A FRIEND OF THE U.S. AND OF U.S. INTERESTS IN AFRICA.

8. IVORY COAST'S CONCERN ABOUT SOVIET PENETRATION HAS IN RECENT MONTHS LED HOUPHOUET TO TAKE MORE SERIOUSLY THE FULMINATIONS OF HIS RADICAL NEIGHBORS, PARTICULARLY SEKOU TOURE OF GUINEA. THE RESPONSE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN THE MODEST IVORIAN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT, AND A READINESS TO REPLY MORE FORCEFULLY TO THE CONTINUED SPATE OF ACCUSATIONS OF COMPLICITY IN COUP ATTEMPTS. GOIC REACTED SHARPLY TO SUGGESTIONS OF ITS INVOLVEMENT IN THE JANUARY 1976 BENIN INVASION. THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN IVORY COAST IS LIKELY TO REMAIN SECONDARY, HOWEVER. HOUPHOUET WILL PREFER TO RELY ON DIALOGUE (AND ON TIES WITH FRANCE) RATHER THAN INCREASE THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT TO THE POINT WHERE IT COULD POSE  
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AN INTERNAL THREAT.

C. OBJECTIVES, COURSES OF ACTION AND ISSUES

9. FOLLOWING ARE WHAT I BELIEVE TO BE THE KEY OBJECTIVES FOR U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AS IT ADDRESSES BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL PROBLEMS AFFECTING OUR RELATIONS WITH THE IVORY COAST.

A. WE MUST ASSUME AND MAINTAIN A POSITION OF GREAT POWER LEADERSHIP IN RESOLVING THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. THE IVORY COAST LOOKS TO THE U.S. TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN BRINGING ABOUT PEACEFUL AND JUST SETTLEMENTS WHICH DENY THE SOVIET UNION AND THEIR CUBAN ALLIES A DECISIVE ROLE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

B. WE MUST TAKE AN EQUALLY FORTHRIGHT AND ENERGETIC ROLE IN THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE AND, IN SO DOING, DEMONSTRATE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD'S DESIRE FOR QUICKER AND MORE SIGNIFICANT TRANSFER OF RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY.

C. WE MUST RETAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF HOUPHOUET BY SHARING WITH HIM OUR VIEWS ON MAJOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC QUESTIONS AFFECTING AFRICA AND BY ELECITING HIS OWN INSIGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

D. WE MUST CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE INCREASED BILATERAL

ECONOMIC LINKS AND U.S. TRADE AND INVESTMENT IN THE IVORY COAST, WHILE ASSISTING U.S. BUSINESSMEN TO ADAPT THEIR METHODS TO PREVAILING PRIORITIES AND PROCEDURES. WITHOUT SEEKING TO DISPLACE FRENCH INTERESTS, OR THE FRENCH PRESENCE IN THE IVORY COAST, WHICH CONTINUE TO PLAY AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN IVORIAN STABILITY AND GROWTH, WE MUST BE READY TO OFFER ALTERNATIVES AND FILL GAPS IN AREAS INSUFFICIENTLY OR INEFFICIENTLY SERVICED BY FRENCH OR  
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OTHER FOREIGN INTERESTS.

E. WE MUST PROTECT A GROWING U.S. PRESENCE, BOTH OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE, IN THE IVORY COAST BY A CAREFULLY CONTROLLED PROGRAM OF ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY WHICH SEEKS TO INCREASE THE BENEFITS TO THE IVORY COAST OF THE U.S. PRESENCE AND REDUCE THE FRICTIONS. IN THIS CONNECTION WE MUST CONTINUE TO MONITOR CLOSELY ALL PROPOSALS TO EXPAND THE U.S. OFFICIAL PRESENCE, GIVING PRIORITY TO A LIMITED NUMBER OF INCREASES WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL AND WHICH SERVE IVORIAN AS WELL AS U.S. INTERESTS.

F. WE MUST EMPHASIZE IN THE EMBASSY'S ANALYTICAL REPORTING THE NEED TO GAIN A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF HOW STRONG AND RESILIENT THE POLITICO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURES OF THE IVORY COAST REALLY ARE AND, SPECIFICALLY, WHETHER THEY WILL SURVIVE HOUPHOUET. WITH A SIGNIFICANT U.S. PRESENCE AND MOUNTING U.S. INVESTMENT IN THE IVORY COAST, OUR ABILITY TO PREDICT THE BEHAVIOR OF THE IVORY COAST AFTER HOUPHOUET ASSUMES SPECIAL IMPORTANCE.

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10. IN SUPPORT OF THESE OBJECTIVES, I RECOMMEND THE FOLLOWING COURSES OF ACTION (ELIMINATING THOSE WHICH ARE SELF-EVIDENT, SELF-SUSTAINING OR IMPLICIT IN THE OBJECTIVES THEMSELVES).

A. OBJECTIVES (A), (B), AND (C) REQUIRE NOT ONLY EFFECTIVE -- AND EFFECTIVELY ARTICULATED -- U.S. POLICIES TOWARD AFRICAN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, BUT A SPECIAL EFFORT ON OUR PART TO COMMUNICATE OUR POSITIONS AND THE REASONING BEHIND THEM TO HOUPHOUET HIMSELF. ON ISSUES OF UNUSUAL IMPORTANCE, WHEN THE UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT OF THE IVORY COAST IS DESIRABLE OR ESSENTIAL, WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO PUT OUR POSITION DIRECTLY TO HOUPHOUET ON A CONFIDENTIAL BASIS BY MEANS OF WRITTEN OR ORAL MESSAGES TO HIM FROM THE PRESIDENT, THE SECRETARY OF STATE OR OTHER HIGH OFFICIALS. ON A REGULAR BASIS, WE SHOULD KEEP HOUPHOUET INFORMED OF OUR PLANS AND ASSESSMENTS BY AUTHORIZING ME TO SHARE INFORMATION WITH HIM AND, WHEN WARRANTED, TO ELICIT HIS OWN VIEWS AND SUGGESTIONS. THIS NEED NOT RESULT IN A PROLIFERATION OF HIGH-LEVEL CORRESPONDENCE. RATHER WHAT IS NEEDED IS A CONSCIOUS DECISION TO STAY IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH HOUPHOUET ON A WIDE RANGE OF AFRICAN PROBLEMS, THE SOLUTION OR AMELIORATION OF WHICH CAN BE AIDED BY HIS MODERATING INFLUENCE. IN MOST CONFIDENTIAL

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CASES, THIS WILL REQUIRE NO MORE THAN AN INFORMATION COPY TO ABIDJAN OF IMPORTANT WASHINGTON MESSAGES ON SOUTHERN AFRICA AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES IN WHICH HOUPHOUET HAS A LEGITIMATE INTEREST, TOGETHER WITH AUTHORIZATION TO SHARE THE GIST OF THE INFORMATION WITH HIM ON A PRIVILEGED BASIS.

B. BEARING IN MIND THE NUMBER OF OFFICIAL AMERICANS -- OVER 120 -- NOW IN ABIDJAN, MOST OF WHOM HAVE LITTLE OR NO DIRECT INTEREST IN OR RESPONSIBILITY FOR RELATIONS WITH THE IVORY COAST, WE MUST BE IMAGINATIVE AND FLEXIBLE IN SEEKING WAYS TO INCREASE THE VALUE OF OUR PRESENCE TO OUR IVORIAN HOSTS (OBJECTIVE E). AID CRITERIA SEEM OVERLY RIGID AND HAVE THE RESULT OF EXCLUDING THE IVORY COAST FROM THE BENEFITS OF BILATERAL U.S. ASSISTANCE, EVEN WHEN SUCH ASSISTANCE -- IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS, FOR EXAMPLE -- WOULD SERVE WIDER REGIONAL NEEDS. THE AREAS OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND TECHNICAL TRAINING ARE INADEQUATELY SERVED BY EXISTING CADRE AND OFFER OTHER

POSSIBILITIES FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE. IF WE ARE TO EXPLOIT THESE OPPORTUNITIES, HOWEVER, WE MUST BE PREPARED TO REVISE EXISTING CRITERIA WHICH HAVE THE EFFECT OF DISQUALIFYING THE IVORY COAST AS A BILATERAL AID RECIPIENT. IT IS IN OUR OWN DIRECT INTEREST THAT THIS BE DONE IF A RECEPTIVE CLIMATE FOR U.S. REGIONAL OFFICES LIKE REDSO, RBFO AND RSO IS TO BE MAINTAINED. FINALLY, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE VALUE OF THE ENTIRE U.S. PRESENCE IN IVORY COAST IS ENHANCED BY AN UNUSUALLY EFFECTIVE PEACE CORPS PROGRAM (85 VOLUNTEERS) AND THAT IN THE COMING YEAR WE WILL WANT TO ASSESS THE PROSPECTS OF RENEGOTIATING THE PEACE CORPS AGREEMENT.

C. OBJECTIVES (D) AND (E) REQUIRE ON THE ONE HAND THAT WE MAINTAIN THE STRENGTH OF THE ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION AT ITS PRESENT LEVEL -- WITH THE ALREADY APPROVED TRANSFER OF A REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE OFFICE FROM CONFIDENTIAL

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MONROVIA TO ABIDJAN THIS SUMMER, THE SECTION'S CAPABILITY WILL BE STRENGTHENED IN A KEY AREA -- AND, ON THE OTHER HAND, THAT WE SHARPEN OUR ABILITY TO ASSESS THE FUNCTIONING AND DURABILITY OF IVORIAN POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES. THIS WILL NOT REQUIRE ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL, BUT WILL REQUIRE CLOSER CONTACT WITH A WIDER RANGE OF INFLUENTIAL IVORIANS. WE SHOULD IN THIS CONNECTION EXPAND THE ALREADY SUCCESSFUL LEADER GRANT PROGRAM AND SHOULD REINSTITUTE THE MILITARY EXCHANGE PROGRAM, THE TERMINATION OF WHICH IN 1974 HAS REMOVED ONE OF OUR MOST VALUABLE TIES WITH THE IVORIAN MILITARY. STEARNS

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